

INCONTINENCE

As the disease progresses, many people with Alzheimer's begin to experience incontinence, or the inability to control their bladder and/or bowels.

- Have a routine for taking him/her to the bathroom; for example every three hours.
- Observe for signs of restlessness or pulling at clothes.
- Be understanding when accidents occur. Stay calm and reassure person.
- Prevent night-time accidents by limiting fluids such as caffeine.
- If going out: take extra clothing, dress in easy to remove clothing.

HOME SAFETY

Creating a safe environment can prevent many stressful and dangerous situations.

- Install secure locks on all outside windows and doors.
- Childproof latches on kitchen cabinets and anyplace where cleaning supplies or other chemicals are kept.
- Keep the house free from clutter.



- Label medications and keep them locked up.
- Ensure knives, lighters and matches, and guns are secured and out of reach.
- Block off stairs so s/he can't fall.



COMMUNICATION

Trying to communicate with a person who has AD can be a challenge. Both understanding and being understood may be difficult.

- Choose simple words and short sentences.
- Avoid talking as if to a baby or as if the person was not there.
- Use one step commands when telling what to do.
- Be patient and allow enough time for a response.
- Minimize distractions and noise such as television or radio.
- Don't argue or try to reason with person.
- Don't say "I just told you that." Just repeat what you said.
- Don't correct or fuss at him/her for getting something wrong.

- Don't say "You can't." Say "Do as much as you can."

Caring for a person with AD is a difficult task and can be overwhelming. One of the biggest struggles is dealing with the difficult behaviors of the person with AD. Having a plan for getting through the day can help.

Taking one day at a time, keeping a sense of humor, getting enough rest and eating right are also ways of taking care of oneself.



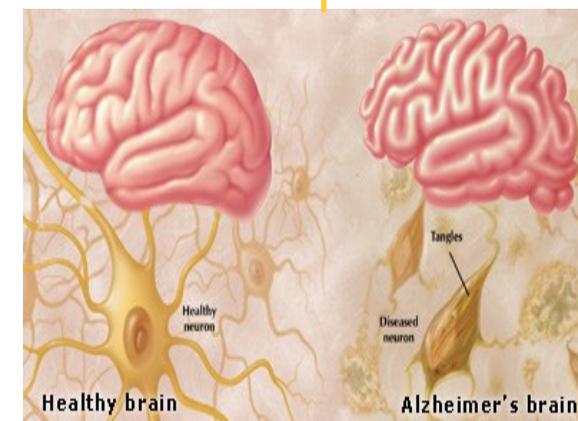
For more information about Alzheimer's Disease please contact:

- The Mercy Care Centre - Tel: 223-0344
- National Council on Ageing-Tel: 822-1546
- The Ministry of Health - Tel: 822-2497

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Alzheimer's Disease



Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a disease of the brain that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills and, eventually, the ability to carry out the simplest tasks. It begins slowly and gets worse over time.

Caregiver Guide of People with Alzheimer's Disease

PACING

- Walk with him/her.
- Hold his/her hand.
- Tell him/her she is safe and loved.
- Offer him/her a snack she can carry in her hand as she walks.
- Keep the walkway clear so s/he is safe from falling.
- Try to distract him/her from pacing. Ask her to look at a magazine or workout a puzzle with you.
- Close the blinds or the curtains.
- Ask if s/he is hungry or if s/he will help you in the kitchen.
- Offer an easy activity like sorting spoons or forks or ask him/her to wipe off the table.



LATE AFTERNOON BEHAVIOR

Fidgeting and acting nervous, becoming easily upset, and wanting to go “home” when s/he is already home are types of late-afternoon behavior.

- Give him/her a hug



- Tell him/her where she is
- Tell him/her she is safe
- Tell him/her you are not leaving
- Change the topic
- Turn on more lights
- Close the blinds or the curtains
- Ask if s/he is hungry or if s/he will help you in the kitchen
- Offer an easy activity like sorting spoons or forks or ask him/her to wipe off the table.

BATHING

While some people with AD don't mind bathing, for others it is a frightening and confusing experience.

- Develop a routine
- Be patient and calm
- Tell him/her what you are going to do
- Draw the bath ahead of time
- Be sensitive to the temperature
- Never leave him/her alone in the bath or shower
- Try a sponge bath



DRESSING

Getting dressed presents a series of challenges: choosing what to wear, getting some clothes off and other clothes on, and struggling with buttons and zippers. -

- Have the person get dressed at the same time each day.
- Allow twice the amount of time you think it will take for him/her to get dressed.
- Encourage the person to dress himself or herself to whatever degree possible.
- Allow the person to choose from a limited selection of outfits.
- Lay his/her clothes out in the order s/he needs to put them on.
- Hand the person one item at a time or give clear, step-by-step instructions.
- If s/he loves one outfit and refuses to wear anything else, buy several outfits that look just like it.
- Use pants with elastic waists and pullover to make dressing easier.



EATING

Eating can be a challenge. Some people with AD want to eat all the time, while others have to be encouraged to maintain a good diet.

- Make the table a calm place to eat.
- Serve meals at the same time every day.
- Serve small portions or several small meals throughout the day.
- Serve foods with different colors and textures.
- Use a bowl instead of a plate if s/he keeps pushing her food off the plate.
- Put only the knife, fork or spoon s/he needs to eat with next to his/her plate.
- Offer plenty of fluids throughout the day.
- Use straws or cups with lids to make drinking easier.

If s/he is refusing to eat, it may be because

- Too many choices on plate. Offer one food item at a time.
- Not knowing how to get started. Show him/her the act of eating.